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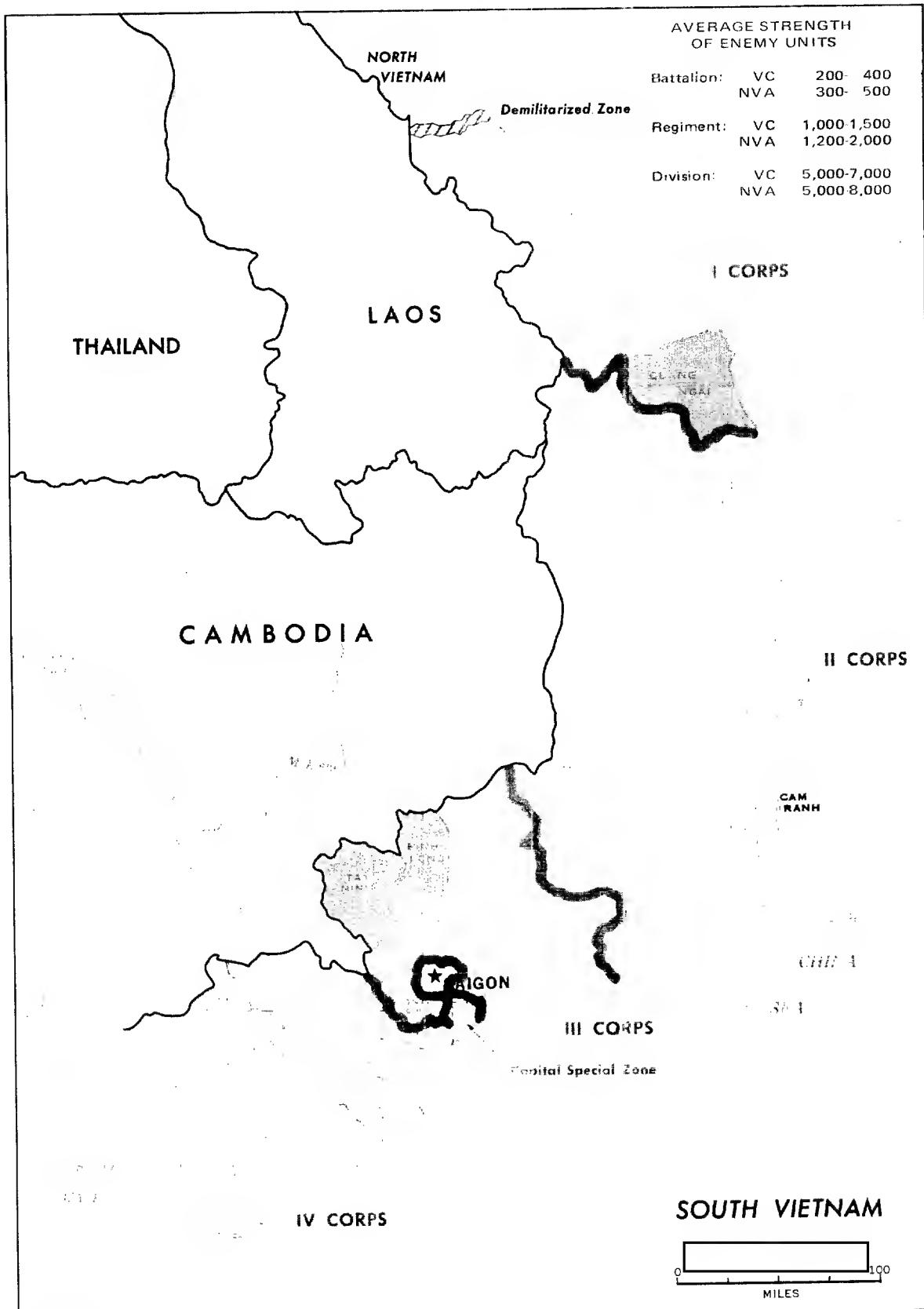
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[C Vietnam: Ground action has tapered off]

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The most significant fighting over the weekend again centered in the provinces north of Saigon along the Cambodian border. The enemy probed allied field positions in Tay Ninh and Binh Long provinces, losing some 60 troops killed while inflicting only light casualties on well-entrenched US and South Vietnamese forces. To the north in Quang Ngai Province South Vietnamese irregulars fought two sharp battles that left 27 Communists and 15 government troops dead. Communist shellings continued at a moderate level throughout the country.

* * * *

Special efforts in recent months to beef up North Vietnam's local military establishment are now coming to light. Several recent translations from June issues of the army newspaper reflect such a drive; it was also a theme in a speech last month by Defense Minister Giap. The campaign appears to be aimed primarily at ensuring a steady flow of qualified manpower into the regular armed forces.

Hanoi probably is trying to repair damage to its local-level military forces caused by the enormous demands levied on them in the past two years, primarily because of heavy troop infiltration to South Vietnam. A cutback in the infiltration effort this spring may have been intended in part to provide a breathing spell to refurbish grass roots sources of military manpower. The Communists may be preparing for the contingency of renewed large-scale infiltration in the coming months.

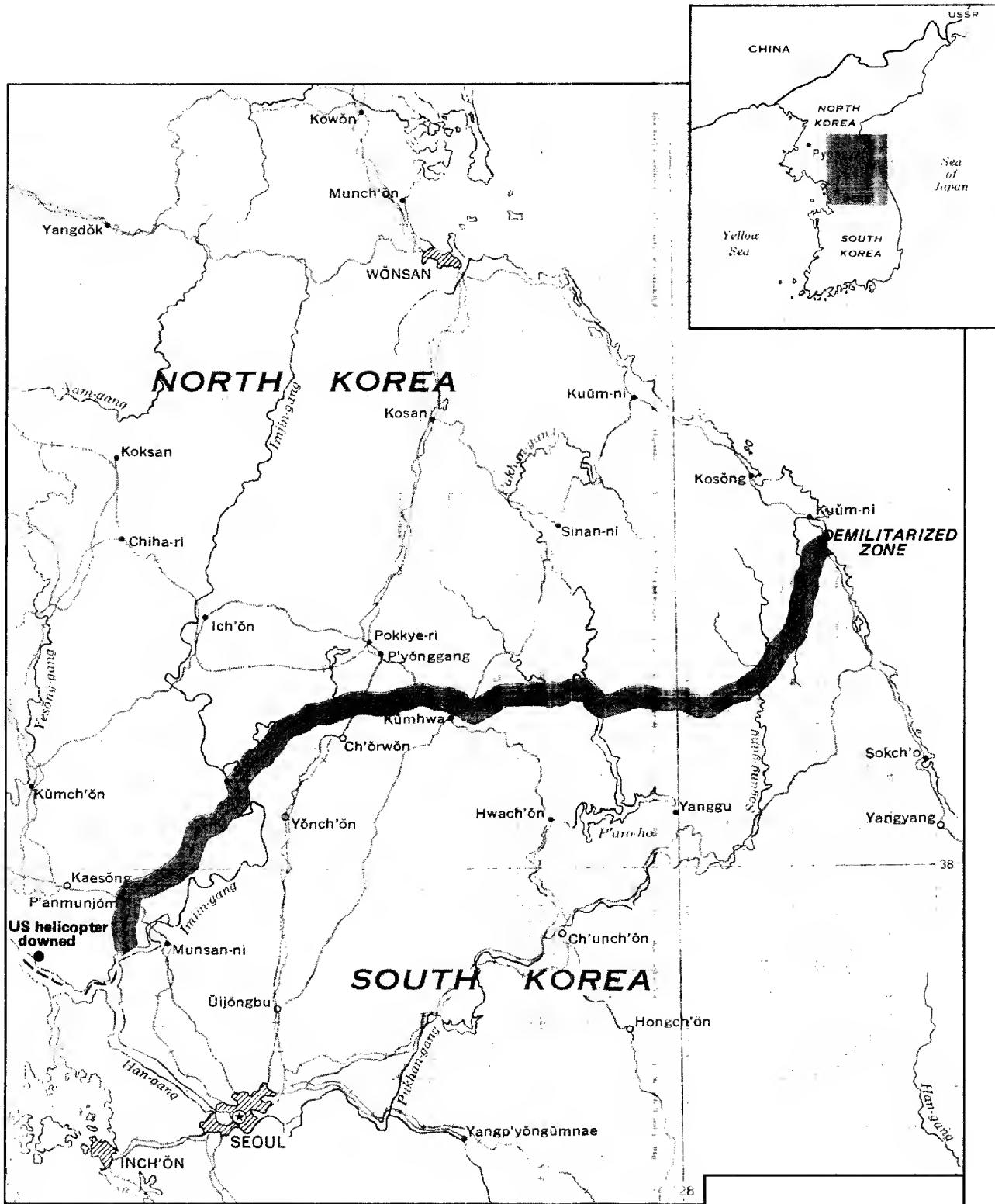
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[North Korea: Pyongyang radio has confirmed that North Korean ground forces shot down a US Army helicopter which inadvertently violated North Korean air-space.

The brief announcement came at 11:39 p.m. Korean time (10:39 a.m. EDT) on 17 August, more than 12 hours after the incident. No mention was made of the fate of the three personnel on board the helicopter when it was forced down about 1.5 miles within North Korean territory along the western end of the Demilitarized Zone. While the statement labeled the incident "another wanton violation" of the armistice agreement, it was strikingly less martial than routine daily propaganda and almost certainly is designed as a noncommittal "filler" to give the regime more time in which to assess the incident and the US response.

The senior US member of the Military Armistice Commission has officially notified the North Korean representative of the missing helicopter and has requested assistance in returning it and its personnel. A meeting of the commission has been proposed for Wednesday.

The North Koreans did not release two pilots captured in a similar incident in 1963 until a year later when the US submitted an official "apology."

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Lebanon: Israel's raid on Mount Hermon on 11 August has brought the Lebanese Government closer to accepting the fedayeen's demand that they be allowed to operate without government restrictions. Lebanon told the UN Security Council that it could not accept responsibility for the actions of Palestinians resident in its territory. The raid has also made it increasingly difficult for Christians to oppose Muslim demands for greater hostility against Israel without appearing to be pro-Israeli. If this trend in the government and among the people continues, it will be more difficult for President Hilu to maintain opposition to the fedayeen, and Lebanon will become increasingly involved in Israeli-Arab incidents.

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Mali: The military government reportedly has moved against a coup plot. Several military officers have been arrested, some of whom apparently are supporters of Modibo Keita, the leftist president who was ousted last November. There is no firm evidence that there was any plot, but the government continues to be beset by strong personal and regional rivalries and serious economic difficulties.

* * * *

Chile: The Christian Democratic Party has nominated Radomiro Tomic, a former ambassador to Washington, as its candidate for the 1970 presidential election. Tomic had hoped for support from the Communist and Socialist parties but this has not materialized. He may, however, pitch his campaign toward leftist voters; he has criticized the recently negotiated nationalization agreement with a large US copper company as being too slow. Despite this, party spokesmen have told the press that Tomic does not plan to alter Chile's current copper policy.

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